

# Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board (STPB)

## Meeting Minutes – October 2016

**Date:** October 19, 2016  
**Time:** 3:00-4:30 pm  
**Location:** CVB, 904 East Shore Drive, Ithaca

### Attendees:

Name	✓	Representation
Ethan Ash	P	Arts-Culture
David Blake	P	At-Large
Kelli Cartmill	E	Lodging
Josh Friedman	P	Arts-Culture
Ian Golden	P	Recreation
Anne Gossen	P	Arts-Culture
John Gutenberger	P	Cornell
Steve Hugo	P	At-Large
Ken Jupiter	P	At-Large
Anne Kellerman	P	At-Large
Mike Mellor	P	At-Large
Cara Nichols	P	Ithaca College
Stephen Nunley	P	At-Large
Sue Perlmut	E	Arts-Culture
Lynnette Scofield	P	Lodging

Name	✓	Representation
Sue Stafford	P	TC3
Mary Kate Wheeler	P	Agriculture
Andy Zepp	A	At-Large
Martha Armstrong	P	TCAD, Non-Voting
Peggy Coleman	P	Chamber, Non-Voting
Gary Ferguson	P	DIA, Non-Voting
Dan Klein	P	TC Legislature, Non-Voting
Dwight Mengel	A	Transportation, Non-Voting
John Spence	A	CAP, Non-Voting
Jennifer Tavares	P	Chamber, Non-Voting
Jim Brophy	A	Associate Member
Carol Kammen	P	Associate Member
Jon Reis	A	Associate Member
Tom Knipe	P	Staff
Kristin McCarthy	P	Staff

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**Also in attendance:** Ronda Roaring, [ilovethefingerlakes.com](http://ilovethefingerlakes.com)

**The meeting was called to order** at 3:05 PM by Chair **Anne Gossen**.

### Meeting Agenda

#### Opener

Anne G. introduced new board member Mary Kate Wheeler and new administrative assistant Kristin McCarthy to the group and asked them to say a few words about what brought them to the STPB. The rest of the board members then went around the table introducing themselves as well to the newcomers.

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David Blake **motioned** to approve the September meeting minutes, **seconded** by Josh Friedman. With the exception of one minor change marking Jennifer Tavares "excused," the minutes were approved unanimously by voice vote.

#### Privilege of the Floor

Ronda Roaring, owner and publisher of [ilovethefingerlakes.com](http://ilovethefingerlakes.com), talked about the unofficial opening of Black Diamond Trail and Mackenzie-Childs open house on Columbus Day. In regards to the latter, she commented on not seeing any Tompkins County tourism information on their display rack and encouraged members to distribute brochures when out on their own excursions.

#### Fall 2016 Grant Recommendations

**ACTION: Recommend Fall 2016 Community Celebration Grants – Carol Kammen**

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Carol requested that the board recommend the Fall 2016 Community Celebration Grants. There were seven grant requests, of which six were approved. The committee declined to approve an application by the Tompkins County Public Library Foundation because the budget was incomplete. \$3,215 remains in the 2016 budget; Carol asked that the surplus be carried over to the 2017 budget, given that 2017 may be a grant-heavy year. In particular, she cited significant historical events such as the bicentennial of the founding of Tompkins County and the centennial of the signing of the Women's Suffrage Amendment in New York State.

Carol **motioned**, by way of her report, to recommend the Fall 2016 Community Celebration Grants. Ken Jupiter **seconded**. The group voted unanimously to forward the committee's recommendation to the Legislature.

#### **ACTION: Recommend Multi-Year Tourism Capital Grant – Martha Armstrong**

Martha addressed the group to request they recommend the multi-year capital grants currently under consideration. (Capital grants slated solely for use in 2016 have already been approved.) In all cases, this is the last piece of the recipients' awards, which end in 2016. The Tourism Program will encumber their funds and release them when the grantees are ready to use them. The committee recommended the following multi-year grant requests be put before the Legislature: Stewart Park; Cayuga Nature Center – Lake Exhibit, which is awaiting matching funds from the state; Science Center Mini Golf (finished); Lake Street Park (finished); and the Museum of the Earth – Smithsonian Exhibit, which is still undergoing design and installation and will need funding moving forward; and the Carl Sagan Walk.

A **motion** to recommend the grants was made by Lynnette Scofield and **seconded** by Stephen Nunley. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

#### **ACTION: Recommend Fall 2016 Tourism Project Grant, New Tourism Initiative Grants & Tourism Marketing & Advertising Grants – Michael Mellor**

Michael reported they had 10 applications for a total of \$86,000 requested but only had \$56,000 in funding available. However, because of how the three different categories are defined, \$10,000 can carry over from this year to the next. Tom Knipe explained the request to carry over those monies would go to the Budget Committee, which would vote on whether to recommend there be a budget reallocation.

Michael touched on some of the key points regarding the grantees as laid out in Tom's summary, which was distributed in advance of the meeting. The discussion covered grantees such as Hangar Theater, Cayuga Wine Trail, Skate Jam, the Ithaca Fringe Festival, Savage Club, and Ithaca Children's Garden.

Steve Nunley **motioned** to recommend the grants. Ian Golden **seconded**. With the exception of Josh Friedman, who abstained, the members voted unanimously to forward the recommendations to the Legislature.

#### **ACTION: Recommend Use of Grant Funds for the Apricot/UW Grant Mgmt Platform – Tom Knipe**

Tom asked the board to consider recommending grant funds be allocated for the Apricot grant management platform. He added that he'd like it to be moved to the administrative budget at some point.

Tom **motioned** to recommend funds be used to support Apricot. Anne Kellerman **seconded**. The board was unanimous in forwarding this request to the Legislature for approval.

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**Chair's REPORT – Anne Gossen**

Anne G. asked the board members to take the Diversity Survey, reiterating its importance and helpfulness as a tool for information gathering. In closing, she thanked Sue Perlgut, who was not in attendance, for her assistance with the survey.

**Staff REPORT – Tom Knipe**

Tom gave a staff report, a copy of which he distributed among the members. An electronic version is attached as part of these minutes. Among other topics, Tom updated the board on the following:

- Recognition Committee and Beautification Program;
- Growth in room tax; numbers are ahead of Smith Travel Research projections, in part thanks to the county's new agreement with AirBnB;
- NYS Tourism Summit, which he attended with Peggy Coleman and Jennifer Tavares; highlights include a budget increase of 10% for the I LOVE NY program to \$55 million;
- Developments at Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport, including three airlines' commitment to maintaining operations there;
- First round of Letters of Interest for Strategic Tourism Implementation, which were due October 27. The STPB Planning and Evaluation Committee will review the letters at their November 2 meeting;
- And upcoming grant-funded events, including Wizarding Weekend, Ithaca Festival's Art in Glow project, and the Ithaca Fantastik Film Fest.

In closing, Tom added he would keep the group updated on the possible relocation of DOT facilities to the airport area.

**STPB Nominating Committee**

**ACTION: Vote to Appoint Nominating Committee to Recommend 2017 STPB Officers**

Anne G. asked for volunteers to join the Nominating Committee. In addition, she reminded everyone that the turnaround time for recommending a slate of officers for 2017 needs to be quick (November). Cara Nichols, Ian Golden, and David Blake volunteered to join the committee.

Lynnette **motioned** to appoint Cara, Ian, and David to the Nominating Committee and was **seconded** by Sue Stafford. The three were unanimously approved.

**Membership & Bylaws Committee Report – Lynnette Scofield**

Lynnette Scofield informed the members that Mike Mellor, Ken Jupiter, Anne Gossen, and David Blake have all re-applied to be appointed to new three-year terms on the STPB. Ethan Ash (term-limited), Sue Perlgut, and John Gutenberger do not plan to renew; new members must be recruited for these open positions. STPB would need to recommend new candidates to the vacant seats at the November meeting in order to have new members start in January.

**Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) Monthly Report – Peggy Coleman**

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Peggy Coleman spotlighted some of the CVB's most recent news and activities. More details are available in the report distributed to members. Here are some highlights from Peggy's presentation:

- Ithaca Events page, which is being updated, will be migrating to the CVB website. Per Tom Knipe's request, Peggy passed around a paper screenshot of the page to give members an idea of what it looks like;
- Star Report. Details included a 68.7% occupancy rate by the end of September and an average nightly hotel rate of \$167.18. Increased revenues stemming from the AirBnB agreement, however, were not in the report, as it is based on hotel surveys;
- Wizarding Weekend was picked up by the Huffington Post as well as international media outlets;
- CVB Instagram account continues to grow and attract followers;
- Visitors Guide is in production, with emphasis on more connectivity and images, and less text.

Peggy also updated the group on the Touchpoint program, agri-culinary tourism initiatives, and the Parents Weekend campaign. In addition, there was discussion, introduced by Anne K., on how to most effectively reach and connect culturally with international travelers.

### **Wayfinding & Interpretive Signage Plan Update – Jennifer Tavares**

Jennifer Tavares updated the group on the status of the Wayfinding project and talked specifically about beautification and public art as key features of the program. Strategic plan implementation continues to be worked on, and the end-of-the-year awards ceremony for residential, business, and place-making beautification is scheduled for Thursday, November 10, at 6 pm at La Tourelle.

Jennifer continues to converse with community partners, such as the City of Ithaca, and other potential funders regarding the Wayfinding project, and she submitted an Upstate Revitalization Grant request in July. In addition, she continues to keep an eye out for Wayfinding projects when traveling outside the area and was particularly impressed by the city of Cleveland's efforts in this regard. She asked fellow members to take pictures of any Wayfinding installations they come across in other communities as well as email her their feedback.

### **Announcements**

Stephen Nunley mentioned a show opening at the Kitchen Theater. Sue Stafford and some other colleagues will be attending a Workforce Development conference to present on Hospitality Star. Lynnette said the Tesla charger at her inn is going gangbusters, with lots of people stopping by to use it.

### **Adjournment**

David Blake **motioned** to adjourn the meeting. Josh Friedman **seconded**. With no further business, Anne G. ended the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** November 16, 2016